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**TESTIMONY OF MIKEY DICKERSON
ADMINISTRATOR OF U.S. DIGITAL SERVICE
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEES ON
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS OF THE
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

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Chairman Hurd, Ranking Member Kelly, Chairman Meadows, Ranking Member Connolly, and Members of the Subcommittees, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

Done right, digital reform is government reform

Millions of people interact with the United States government every day, relying on digital products such as websites, online forms, and mobile apps, to access and understand government services. Americans are accustomed to the high standards of service set by the private sector, but outdated technology and complicated user interfaces can sometimes make interactions with the government frustrating and inefficient. Americans deserve simple, effective digital services. We are in a new era of technology and innovation in the U.S. Government, and we are using the latest technology to deliver better services, engage Americans, and tackle tough challenges.

Creation of the U.S. Digital Service

President Obama launched the United States Digital Service (USDS) less than two years ago as a means to improve our Nation's most important public-facing digital services. The USDS is a collaboration between our country's top technical talent in product design and software engineering and the government's brightest leaders and civil servants, who work in partnership to apply private sector best practices our digital services. In 2014, the small team of technologists initially planned to focus on three projects, but with additional funding and the support of Congress starting in FY 2015, the size and scope of the USDS has increased steadily. Today, the USDS has small teams working on high-priority projects with a number of agencies across government, such as the Departments of Veterans Affairs, State, Education, Homeland Security, Health and Human Services, Defense; the Internal Revenue Service; and the Small Business Administration.

The work of the USDS is centered on four main goals:

- **Transform Critical Services.** The USDS is focused on measurably improving our Nation's most important public-facing services. The team helps to manage technology projects, working alongside civil servants and IT contractors, relying on (1) a user-centered design framework that prioritizes the needs, wants, and limitations of users; and (2) agile software development practices that enable iterative development and the ability to rapidly respond to change and feedback.
- **Rethink How We Build and Buy Digital Services.** The USDS is working on modernizing procurement processes and practices for the modern digital era. For example, the USDS has developed training programs and tools to enable federal contracting officers to apply industry best practices to digital procurements, and serve as expert advisors to their CIOs on procurements. Improving procurement processes and practices with our partners in the IT contracting community will remain a critical element of modernizing our government, as skilled contractors will continue to deliver the majority of the government's digital services, just as they do today.
- **Initiate the development of common platforms and standards.** The USDS is working to identify pilot opportunities for common platforms that can improve services needed by multiple agencies.
- **Bring top technical talent into public service.** In support of these goals, a specialized talent acquisition team is working to recruit and place over 200 Digital Service Experts by the end of 2017, to join the government for term-limited tours of duty with the USDS, during which they will work with civil servants inside agencies. Since the launch of our online application in January 2015, thousands have applied to join the USDS, with more than 150 currently serving. The long-term goal is to build and sustain institutional capacity within agencies while simultaneously encouraging a tradition of public service in the tech industry.

In the short amount of time that the USDS has been operating, we have seen success in many projects, especially under the following circumstances:

- The USDS team is small, and focused on a high priority project.
- Agency leadership is engaged and supportive.
- The USDS team is tightly integrated with existing contractors and career staff.
- The project has a hard deadline.
- The project may have cross-agency dependencies, or many stakeholders across the government.

While the USDS is still a very new program, we are already seeing early results in improving services for the public. For example:

- **Building a single unified digital experience for all veterans accessing programs at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs** – Together with the VA, the USDS built a

new website – Vets.gov – to provide a simple, easy-to-use platform for veterans to access the information they need about the VA’s benefits, educational assistance, economic opportunities, and additional tools.

- **Helping students choose the right college** – With the Department of Education, the USDS built a new tool – The College Scorecard – to help students, families, and their advisers make better decisions about where to go to college. The tool includes the most comprehensive, reliable data published on students’ employment outcomes and success in repaying student loans. More than 1.4 million people have visited the College Scorecard, and the data powering the College Scorecard has been accessed over 9.4 million times in 7 months.
- **Saving small businesses time and money** – The USDS assisted the Small Business Administration in establishing an agile procurement to modernize technology to streamline the certification process. The newly launched Certify.SBA.gov saves small businesses time and money, and provides small businesses access to federal contracts and capital more efficiently.

Conclusion

By applying the best practices in technology and design to the Federal government, the USDS helps enable the delivery of more reliable and effective digital services to the American public. Through the recruitment of top technology talent from one of the most competitive industries in the world, the USDS is inspiring a tradition of public service in the tech industry – similar to traditions of service we see in other sectors, such as law and medicine – which will help the Federal government continue to deliver crucial services. I thank the Committee for holding this hearing, and for your commitment to providing top-notch digital services to the American people. I am pleased to answer any questions you may have.